REMARKS

Entry of the subject amendment (at least for the purpose of appeal should such action become necessary, and favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application are requested.

By way of the amendment instructions above, independent claim 51 has been revised so as to emphasize that substantially 100% of the recited fibers are disposed in fiber bundles. Support for such amendment may be found in the originally filed specification at page 7, line 19.

Prior to discussing the substantive inappropriateness of the art-based rejections of record, the Examiner will note that a formal Notice of Appeal is being filed concurrently herewith so as to toll the time limit running against this application, and to provide the Examiner with sufficient time in which to consider the amendments and remarks presented herewith.

The only issues now remaining in this application are the rejections advanced under 35 USC §103(a) based principally on the Hannes et al patent (USP 4,112,174). Specifically, claims 51-57 and 60 attracted a rejection under 35 USC § 103(a) based on Hannes et al in view of Weeks (USP 5,409,573), while Helwig et al (USP 6,054,022) was combined with such references to reject claims 58-59 under the same statutory provision. Applicants suggest that such art-based rejections are inappropriate against the amended version of independent claim 51 and claims 52-60 dependent therefrom.

o In this regard, applicants note that Hannes et al disclose a mat which comprises base fibers (monofilament glass fibers), and reinforcement bundles (elongated glass fiber bundles). (See, column 3, lines 11 – 15) Such a passage reveals to an ordinarily skilled person that there is a clear difference

between the appearance of the base fibers and reinforcement fibers in the mat. Specifically, the cited passage in Hannes et al discloses the base fibers to be monofilament fibers, and the bundles to be of reinforcement fibers. The passages thereafter in Hannes et al make a clear difference between, on the one hand, the base fibers, and, on the other hand, reinforcement bundles.

Secondly, starting on column 4, line 31, the reinforcement fiber bundles of the Hannes et al patent are disclosed. Thus, one finds at Column 4, lines 58 – 65 that the share of the reinforcement fibers in the fiber bundles may be 5 to 90 % of the total fiber content, whereby the amount of the base fibers may be from 95 to 10% of the total fiber content. In complete contradistinction, the present applicants' invention as now defined in independent claim 51 makes it quite clear that ***substantially 100%*** of the fibers in the bundles are reinforcement fibers.

In view of the above, therefore, one of ordinary skill in this art would clearly not be led to employing a high percentage of reinforcement fibers in the bundles – i.e., substantially 100%. Indeed, Hannes et al provide evidence that an ordinarily skilled person would have a distinct prejudice against employing such a high percentage of reinforcement fibers in the bundles as defined in applicants' claim 51.

Applicants note that the secondary references to Weeks and Helwig et al do not cure the deficiencies of Hannes et al discussed above. Therefore, even if the secondary references of Weeks and/or Helwig et al are combined with Hannes et al, the present invention would not result.

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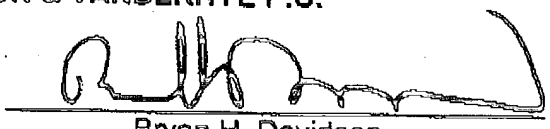
Withdrawal of the art-based rejections and early passage of this application to allowance are solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: 

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